

Message Text

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR RUSH AND PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC

SPEAK AT AMERICAN COMMUNITY BICENTENNIAL BANQUET

1. THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY OF PARIS GAVE A GALA BANQUET FEBRUARY 23 TO CELEBRATE WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY AND THE AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL. PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC AND AMBASSADOR RUSH WERE THE GUESTS OF HONOR AND PRINCIPAL SPEAKERS. BOTH LAUDED THE CONTINUED STRENGTH AND VITALITY OF THE US-FRENCH RELATIONSHIP AFTER 200 YEARS, AND BOTH CALLED FOR FUTURE COOPERATION ON THE BASIS OF A PRAGMATIC APPROACH AND AN OPEN DIALOGUE. END SUMMARY.

2. OUR THREE MAIN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN PARIS, THE AMERICAN CLUB, THE AMERICAN CHAMBER, AND THE AMERICAN WOMEN'S GROUP, HELD A BANQUET ON FEBRUARY 23 TO CELEBRATE WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY AND THE AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL. AMBASSADOR RUSH AND PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC WERE THE GUESTS OF HONOR AND PRINCIPAL SPEAKERS.

3. THE AMBASSADOR'S SPEECH EMPHASIZED THE STRENGTH OF THE WORLD'S OLDEST ALLIANCE, ESPECIALLY ITS ABILITY TO

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SURVIVE PERIODS OF DEEP POLICY DIVERGENCE. HE

ATTRIBUTED THE ALLIANCE'S STRENGTH TO THE COMMONALITY OF GOALS AND IDEALS WHICH TRANSCENDS TEMPORARY POLICY PROBLEMS, AS WELL AS TO THE DETERMINATION OF BOTH COUNTRIES' LEADERSHIP TO OPERATE THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP ON A BASIS OF FRANK AND FREQUENT CONSULTATION. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE OF THE CURRENT SITUATION, THE BASIS FOR WHICH WAS DEVELOPED AT MARTINIQUE BY PRESIDENTS FORD AND GISCARD.

4. AS EXAMPLES OF THE CONSTRUCTIVE HANDLING OF THORNY POLICY PROBLEMS, THE AMBASSADOR CITED THE F-104 REPLACEMENT ISSUE AND US LANDING RIGHTS FOR THE CONCORDE. ON THE LATTER, THE AMBASSADOR TOOK THE OCCASION TO EMPHASIZE AN ELEMENT THAT HAD RECEIVED INSUFFICIENT ATTENTION IN FRANCE -- THE POPULAR OPPOSITION IN THE UNITED STATES TO THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF A SUPERSONIC PASSENGER AIRCRAFT, DOMESTIC OR FOREIGN, AND THAT THEREFORE FOREIGN POLICY WAS NOT THE REAL REASON FOR THE STRONG OPPOSITION TO CONCORDE IN SOME QUARTERS IN THE US. THE AMBASSADOR ALSO PAID TRIBUTE TO THE OUTSTANDING DECISION ON CONCORDE RENDERED BY TRANSPORT SECRETARY COLEMAN.

5. PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC'S ADDRESS ALSO UNDERScoreD THE COMMON IDEALS AND VALUES WHICH FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN WILLING TO DEFEND JOINTLY REGARDLESS OF EPHEMERAL DISAGREEMENTS. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY FRANCE TO THE AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARIES WAS BASED ON FRENCH POPULAR APPROVAL AND NOT JUST ON THE DECISIONS OF LOUIS SIXTEENTH AND HIS ADVISERS. HE SAID THAT THE STRENGTH OF THE FRENCH NAVY AT THE TIME WAS WHAT REALLY COUNTED, AND THAT INDEPENDENCE CAN ONLY BE BASED ON THE REALITY OF POWER.

6. TURNING TO THE PRESENT, CHIRAC FOCUSED ON THE ECONOMIC UPTURN WHICH HE SAID IS CLEARLY IN PROCESS. IN THIS CONTEXT, HE POINTED OUT THAT FRANCO-AMERICAN TRADE IS STILL RELATIVELY MODEST, AND THAT FRANCE SUFFERS A TWO-TO-ONE TRADE IMBALANCE WITH THE US. HE SAID HE HOPED THE ECONOMIC UPTURN WOULD NOT BE SPOILED BY ANY RESORT TO PROTECTIONIST MEASURES WHICH WOULD BE UNCLASSIFIED

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CONTRARY TO BOTH FRENCH AND AMERICAN POLICY. ON CONCORDE, THE PRIME MINISTER EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE FRANCO-BRITISH SUPERSONIC WOULD DEMONSTRATE TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC THAT THE ADVANTAGES OF SUPERSONIC TRANSPORT FAR OUTWEIGH THE INSIGNIFICANT DAMAGE IT CAUSES TO THE ENVIRONMENT.

RUSH

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